BOSSING A ONE-SHIP NAVY

By WILBUR FORREST

ROMANCE usually entwines itself about objects of the human variety. It is not frequent that romance or near-romance weaves a skein of circumstances about an inanimate thing. There is at least near-romance in the story of L'Indépendance, a little ninety-nine ton parcel of timbers, ropes and canvas to-day scouring the blue Caribbean with the certain dignity of being an entire navy.

Some weeks ago, at a certain point in the "Sea of Caribs," two ships, at first tiny dots on the horizon, and soon passing abeam just out of hailing distance, dipped their respective flags in solemn salute. One carried a "mighty" little one-pounder rapid-fire gun on her bow and the other mounted a more sinister and powerful three-inch piece aft.

The American flag at the stern of the latter came slowly down, while the former allowed a red and blue piece of bunting—badly tattered—to slide down a long rope just aft of the mainsail and remain almost wetted in the blue waters tumbling away from her stern until the Star Spangled flag crawled up again.

The Navy Has Two Masts And Four Sails

The flag dipping incident might have seemed trivial except that it constituted a solemn greeting from one of the world's greatest navies to the most unique and perhaps smallest navy in the world. The American Navy, as represented, was a sleek little gray rat of a sub chaser, in a big hurry for some place and making little fuss about it. The other was L'Indépendance, all four sails bellied out in the brisk wind, and with a certain birdlike majesty about her she was representing, as usual, the whole Haytian Navy.

The personnel of the Haytian Navy includes fourteen persons, twelve of them as black as the well known ace of spades and two as white as a tropical sun will let their American skins remain. The "Admiral" of the Haytian fleet is "Louie" Valliere, of Plymouth, Mass., whose twenty-six years, less nine which he required to grow up, have given him a knowledge of his particular job unsurpassed, at least in Haytian waters. The "Vice-Admiral" of the fleet is Charles H. Eurton, of Indianapolis, who despite his saltless birthplace began to know a belaying pin from a rolling pin in his teens while cruising in many seas with the "old" American Navy. The remainder of the human element in the Haytian Navy may be lumped as "discipline."

When Louie gives an order he expects it to be obeyed pronto.

"I don't kiss 'em on both cheeks when I want 'em to up the mainsail," said Louie one day as we cruised the Caribbean. "They don't expect it, and they like me just the same. If you haven't got discipline on your ship, well, you ain't got any business runnin' a ship."

"Up with that jib, you black sons of apes," is a command in the Haytian Navy that will put that particular piece of canvas aloft in record time. "And they like me for it," soliloquizes Louie. And the best proof of it is that the personnel of Hayti's present navy has changed but little since Louie quit his career in a submarine chaser to become an "admiral."

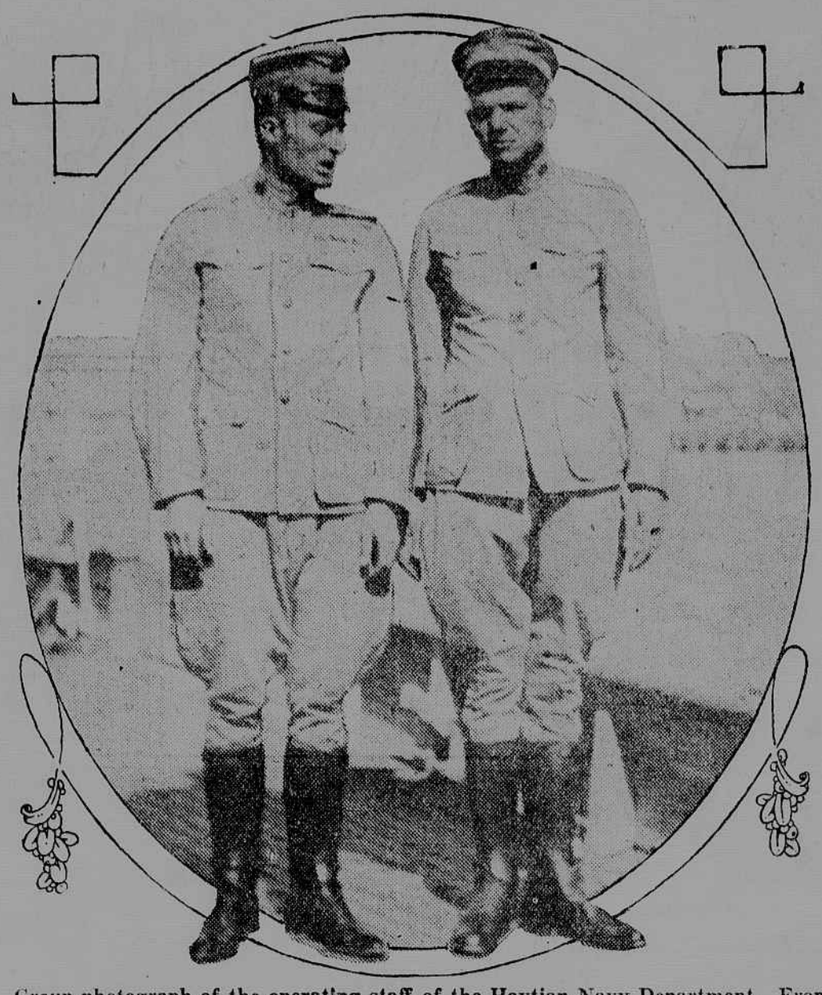
New York and Boston yachtsmen perhaps fail to identify this little ninety-nine-tonner under her present name, which, despite her American skipper, who is normally a lieutenant in the Haytian gendarmerie, signifies the independence of Hayti. She is perhaps more American than Haytian.

Under the maiden name of Admiral she was designed by D. J. Lawler and built at the Providence drydocks in 1892. Originally a steam yacht, she was owned by Pliny Fisk millionaire banker, who sold her in 1907 to George R. Sheldon, Wall Street broker. She became the favorite playship of another New York millionaire, Irving T. Bush, creator and president of the Bush Terminal Company, in 1912, and two years later headed up the Atlantic coast to become the property of Gordon Dexter, of Boston.

It Sailed in the Best Society, This Navy Did

Equipped with a big spread of canvas and a gasoline engine "kicker" in 1917, she passed to the United States government with many other little ships of her class for war purposes Then she became a scout of the Caribbean and passed under the flag of Hayti with three other craft, managed for the Haytian government by men in the Haytian military service, the Gendarmerie d'Haiti. The gendarmerie is commanded by a lieutenant colonel of the United States Marine Corps, who assumes, so far as Hayti is concerned, the rank of a four-star general.

"Admiral" Louie was figuratively shoved by fate into his novel job of operating an entire navy from one deck and being the supreme commander thereof. Higher officials of the gendarmerie leave all the nautical knowledge strictly to Louie. And any one who has sailed around treacherous Mole St. Nicholas and other equally ungentle waters of the Caribbean, not to mention the Windward Passage, with "Admiral" Louie is equipped to know that there is perhaps more genuine sailing knowledge to-day in the Haytian navy than in our own great fleets—size and comparison considered.



Group photograph of the operating staff of the Haytian Navy Department. From left to right, standing—Vice-Admiral Eurton and Admiral Valliere

Louie Valliere was brought up on a farm somewhere in the vicinity of Brockton, Mass. Farming didn't appeal to him, so he went to sea. After service before the mast with fishing fleets, often months on a single cruise, Louie saved up enough money to get a ship of his own. She was about fifty years old when he bought her, and one day the keel dropped off. To make the tale brief, Louie then enlisted in the United States Navy. He had never seen a sub chaser, but with characteristic American initiative—on the part of somebody in Washington—his first navy job was to take a chaser from one port of the Atlantic coast—where she had been built—to another port. Somebody's armchair initiative in Washington did not bother Louie. They could have handed him a battleship and it would have been the same. The weather was sundry degrees below zero, but Louie got together with his crew and shoved off.

Admiral Louie Didn't Have His Rule Book Along

Looking more like the interior of a Knickerbocker ice wagon than a boat, the chaser and crew turned up according to orders at the new port three days later. The admiral of the port immediately wanted to know what a blankety-blank d—— fool who didn't know enough about the navy to salute was doing with a sub chaser, and, anyway, where had he come from and who gave the blankety-blank order, anyway? It all straightened out in the end and Louie went to sea in the chaser. He crossed the Atlantic a couple of times and then fate picked him up and set him down in the Caribbean as captain of one of the four units of the Haytian fleet. To-day Louie is the "Admiral" and L'Indépendance is his flagship and she shakes the meanest mast in the Caribbean, while the twelve "sons of apes" who are her crew also shake the fastest navy legs thereabouts.

Louie's creed is discipline. "If you ain't got discipline aboard your ship you ain't a skipper," said Louie one day, when we were beating it for the Windward Passage across to Cuba. The "fleet" was in contortions, like a small boy with green apple collywobbles, and a couple of the crew were having an experience with mal-de-mer.

"You can't wet nurse these sons of apes like they do it in the American navy," commented the "Admiral." "A year ago last May we were in the passage between Tortugas and the mainland, with the wind in her tail, and we lost the rudder. What d'ya suppose might have happened if we had had a lot of coddled infants aboard that time? Well, we'd be bleachin' in the sun somewhere over there right now. Was these birds scared? I'll say so. But they had that discipline thing so it was automatic. We were beatin' it for Cape Haytien, and we had to go, rudder or no rudder."

The Skipper Is No Swivel Chair Helmsman

L'Indépendance, whose Boston name Admiral is still on her ship's bell just aft the 1-pounder armament, has made the 200-foot entrance to Santiago Bay at least once under full sail while Louie disdainfully refused the Cuban pilot who chugged out in a motor boat to take her in. This feat of seamanship can only be thoroughly realized when one has passed the almost invisible little channel under Morro Castle leading its crooked way into Santiago Bay.

On occasions like this the "Admiral" himself takes the helm. Haytian helmsmen are neither born nor made, and usually, if they lose the designated point on the compass, they pick out another that looks just like it and keep right on steering. The "Admiral" can tell by the way the sails are acting if the helmsman is following a self-picked compass point. Though he may be the whole 138-foot length of the navy from the wheel you can hear him shout back, "Get on your course, you son of an ape!" And the "son of an ape" picks another pretty little compass pyramid and holds until Louie comes back to straighten him out. Until he's straightened it makes little difference to him whether he is sailing toward Cape Horn or Cape Cod.

The Haytian navy yard is at Port-au-Prince, the capital. There, along a worm-eaten dock, lies the navy when she's in port, and on the other side of the dock are three fast little sub-chasers, assigned by the greater navy to do duty far south of the United States naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba. Louie ups sails once a month regular to negotiate the rough Windward Passage to Guantanamo Bay to bring back gasoline for the Gendarmerie d'Haiti. And it is rough! Tons of water come aboard over the low rail of L'Indépendance every time she makes it, but it's all the same to the "Admiral," the "Vice-Admiral" and the personnel of the Haytian navy.

THE THIRD PARTY

By Pierre Mille—Translated by William L. McPherson

MME. DE MARCONNE mounted the steps of her house in the Rue Royale, in Lille, as the bells of the Church of St. Catherine called the faithful to high mass. She had gone to low mass, and on leaving the church had stopped at the confectioner's to order some sugared cookies and at the florist's to buy an armful of roses, which she was carrying home. That is why it was already 10 o'clock. Florentine, her femme de chambre, ran out to meet her, trembling with excitement.

"Madame," she said, "Mlle. Thérèse is waiting in the salon."

"Mlle. Thérèse!" exclaimed Mme. de Marconne.

"Mme. Mouvenot," Florentine corrected herself. "Madame's daughter, I mean. She arrived from Paris on the morning train."

You could see by her air that she was communicating a great piece of news—something absolutely unexpected.

"Thérèse?" said Mme. de Marconne, without showing the least sign of satisfaction at the information. "Thérèse; what in the world is she up to now?"

Nevertheless, she went in and greeted her daughter. They kissed each other affectionately.

"How young you are, mother!" said Thérèse.

Mme. de Marconne was under forty. You would have taken her for the older sister of her daughter, who was twenty. But she overdid the austerity of her widow's garb. Her black hat was fastened under her chin with ribbons, and the hat itself was pure provincial in model. Her straight gown fell clear to her feet. There wasn't a trace of powder on her face, which was still clear and fresh. Her daughter, beside her, with a skirt cut short at the knees, a turban of silvered straw, and rouge on her lips, looked like a little, dried-out thing.

Mme. de Marconne herself wasn't pleased by the contrast. She thought that the air of Paris wasn't good for young women from the provinces. But perhaps this unanticipated arrival meant good news. She smiled.

"You came to tell me that everything is patched up, didn't you, Thérèse? You aren't going to get a divorce? You a Marconne and a divorcée! It wasn't possible. I knew it. And your husband is charming, charming. I always told you so."

"He is unbearable," the daughter answered. "Perfectly unbearable! We have scenes, such scenes!"

"He is a little impulsive, but charming," the mother insisted.

"Yes, I want to get a divorce," Thérèse went on determinedly. "There is no question of reconciliation. Quite the contrary. We have already agreed to have a suit brought. The case is following its course."

"So much the worse," Mme. de Marconne sighed.

"I meant to say that it ought to be following its course. But"——

She suddenly burst into tears.

"Mother, mother, you are the only one who can get us out of our difficulty. Imagine it, the process has been stopped. My lawyer says—both our lawyers say—that the court will never grant a divorce under conditions as they are. Article 236"——

"What is Article 236?"

"I have obtained an order in compliance with Article 236, authorizing me to maintain a separate domicile. That is indispensable, you understand. So long as you don't maintain a separate domicile the court may, and even must, consider the possibility of a reconciliation between husband and wife. That's natural enough."

"Well?"

"I have been unable to find any place to live," groaned Thérèse, again bursting into tears. "There isn't a vacant apartment in Paris, not one. I continue to live with Emilien; I can't do anything else. It is atrocious, atrocious. We are like two cats in the same basket. We have never got along worse, yet the court will refuse us a divorce."

"Then you wish to live here?" asked Mme. de Marconne. "You want me to take you as a guest?"

"I live in Lille?" cried Thérèse with horror. "In the first place, my presence in Paris is indispensable to the divorce process," she added, reddening a little.

Mme. de Marconne could easily guess that Thérèse had other reasons for staying in Paris. Her eyes darkened.

"What then?" she asked.

"I want to beg you, mother, to come to Paris and live with us. Our lawyers say that the only way to get around the difficulty is for the mother to live with the daughter in the joint domicile. That would be a means of proving that a reconciliation had not taken place. Her testimony would be sufficient. It seems that jurisprudence is very technical. Mother, mother, please come!"

Mme. de Marconne reflected a minute or two. Who will say why her eyes brightened again and why she stole a glance at herself in the mirror?

"I shall be glad to join you, my dear," she said. "You can go back as soon as you like. I'll arrive in about a week."

When Mme. Mouvenot told her husband that his mother-in-law had consented to live with them, he said at once:

"Ah! So much the better!"

He was about to add: "She is charming."

But guessing that his wife would answer, "You prefer her to me; you are comparing me with her," he prudently restrained himself. He didn't enjoy domestic scenes. Nevertheless, his wife was curiously impressed by the little he did say and almost stared him out of countenance.

Mme. de Marconne established herself in the household without any formality. She never mentioned the divorce. But the next afternoon at 5 o'clock, as Thérèse was getting ready to go out, she said:

"I'll go with you. You may visit your dressmaker or the shops or make calls. I am curious to get in the way of all these things again."

Thérèse didn't dare to protest. It was the same every day and every week. Thérèse was accordingly overwhelmed by complaints from a man whom she thought highly attractive, but whom, to tell the truth, she didn't know very well. They piled up in a general delivery box at the postoffice, where she couldn't venture to go often, her mother being nearly always with her. Finally, M. de Breuil risked a call. Mme. de Marconne was present at the interview. The visitor was much taken aback. Thérèse found a means of writing to him, to tell him he must wait, she couldn't say just how long. But he took that as an adieu. For that matter, he didn't like complications.

Life ran along without frictions or painful discussions. Husband and wife were both on their guard, neither wishing to show anything but evenness of temper before a third party. Moreover, Mme. de Marconne showed extraordinary address in discovering soothing yet agreeable topics of conversation. She also suggested visits to the theater or the cabarets. The household gradually resumed the habits of ordinary family life.

So Mme. de Marconne gave the lie to the wisdom of an old song, not yet forgotten. Things went better when a third party was present. Emilien was observant enough to appreciate this. In one of the rare moments when he was alone he happened to sing:

"Mais quand on est trois.
Quand on est trois.
Mamzell' Thérèse."

But he didn't sing it in the melancholy tone required by tradition. He had become once more calmly and comfortably happy. I suppose it was gratitude which led him to express his happiness more to his mother-in-law than to his wife. Mme. de Marconne disdained to conceal that she enjoyed these sympathetic talks. She said one day to her daughter: "He is delightful."

Thérèse made no answer and seemed depressed. She was somewhat colder thereafter to her mother, but not to Emilien. A few days later the latter remarked:

"The odor in this apartment has entirely changed. I don't know this perfume. It is very sweet." . . .

"It's mamma's Iris," Thérèse explained. "She doesn't use it on herself, but puts it on all her clothes."

"It is an exquisite odor," Emilien said.

"Why don't you say at once that you love mamma?" Thérèse burst out. "Why don't you say that you are thinking of her all the time—all the time?"

"Of her?" exclaimed Emilien, choking a little.

Yet he thought:

"It's true, all the same. She is charming, my mother-in-law. How young she looks. How pretty she still is!

"Apropos," he remarked, "the case is getting on. We have been summoned to attend court next Tuesday for the preliminaries of an attempted conciliation."

"It isn't worth while going!" cried Thérèse, angrily. "I don't want a divorce any more. You want one, do you? Well, I don't now. I am going to write that a conciliation has been effected. In the first place, how would I find an apartment? I'll stay here."

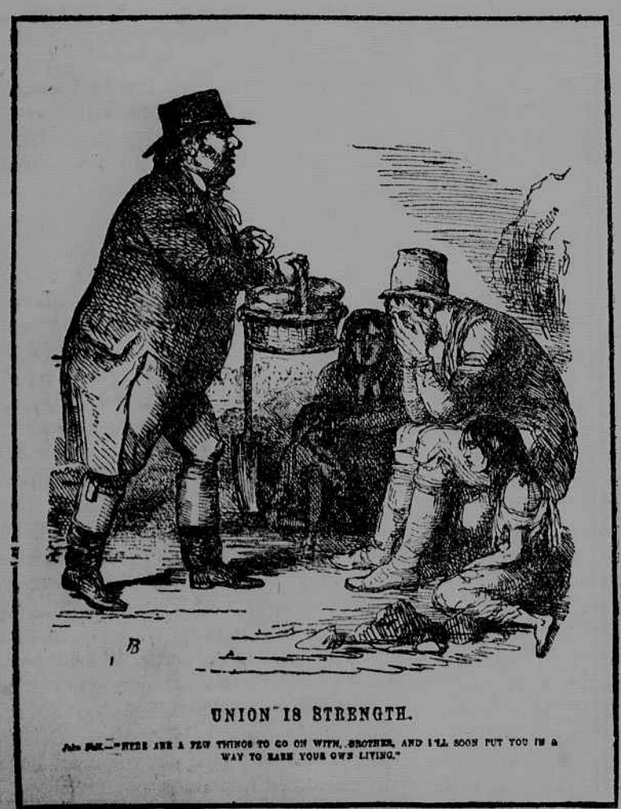
"But I don't ask anything better," answered Emilien. "You may stay and stay as long as you like. But you'll stay for good, won't you?"

"Well, yes. For good. For good. But on one condition."

"Ah! On what condition?"

"Without mamma!" demanded Thérèse.

The Irish Question as London Punch Saw It Seventy-Five Years Ago



UNION IS STRENGTH.

John Bull.—"HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO GO ON WITH, BROTHER, AND I'LL SOON PUT YOU IN A WAY TO EARN YOUR OWN LIVING."

THE IRISH CINDERELLA AND HER HAUGHTY SISTERS, BRITANNIA AND CALEDONIA.

JUSTICE TO IRELAND.

"She gave them some broth without any bread,
Then whipp'd them all 'round, and sent them to bed."

HEIGHT OF IMPUDENCE.

Irishman to John Bull—"Spare a trifle, y.. Honour, for a poor Irish Lad to buy a bit of a blunderbuss with."